CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURA-NAN MISHRA): (a) Government had decided to import 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97, and against this a quantity of 16.75 lakh tonnes was contracted for import by STC. Government has also decided to import an additional quantity of 2 million tonnes during 1997-98 and against this, STC has contracted a quantity of 1.00 million tonnes so far.

(b) Against the 16.75 lakh tonnes of wheat contracted for import during 1996-97, a quantity of 14.71 lakh tonnes has arrived at Indian ports upto 2.5.97.

(c) Landed cost of imported wheat would be approximately Rs. 7100 per tonnes including cost of Rs. 29/- per gunny. Cost of transportation would depend on the final destination and actual cost would be known only after total despatches of imported wheat from the ports are over.

(d) The cost of imported wheat and the Minimum Support Price fixed in India are not comparable. Excluding transport, insurance, handling charges etc, the actual prices which farmers get in, say Australia, will be around Rs. 3960/- per M.T. The Minimum Support Price for wheat in India has been fixed at Rs. 4150/- per MT and additional Rs. 600/ per MT is given as bonus to the j farmers for 1997-98. j

(e) The decision to import wheat has been taken to augment its availability ir the country with a view to contain the open market prices.

Resistance by Government of Punjab to release adequate quantity of wheat to Government

3725. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is resistance on the part of Punjab Government for supply of adequate quantity of wheat from Punjab by the Government for Public Distribution System in the country;

(b) whether Government are planning to import three to five million tonnes of wheat to keep the prices of wheat at marginal level; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to resolve the dispute with the Punjab Government in not allowing the Centre to get larger quantity of wheat for the Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURA-NAN MISHRA): (a) No, Sir. However, the Government of Punjab had requested for increase in the minimum Support Price of wheat for the 1997-98 rabi marketing season by at least Rs. 100/per quintal.

(b) The State Trading Corporation has been authorised to import upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1997-98 to augment its availability in the country.

(c) The Central Government have announced a bonus of Rs. 60/-per quintal in addition to the MSP of Rs. 415/ per quintal for wheat procured for Central Pool during the period 17.3.97 to 10.6.97. After this announcement, no other issue for increase in the price of wheat is pending with the Central Government.

समर्थन मूल्य के आधार पर चीनी की खरीद तथा बिक्री

3726. **श्री रामजीलाल** :क्या खाद्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार द्वारा नियत समर्थन मूल्य के आधर पर चीनी की खरीद तथा बिक्री हुई है;

(ख) यदि हां तो उसका राज्य-वार ब्योरा क्या है;

(ग) क्या हरियाणा में सरकार द्वारा नियत समर्थन मूल्य के अनुसार चीनी खरीदी नहीं गई; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

कृषि मंत्री और खाद्य मंत्री तथा नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री चतुरानन मिश्र): (क) सरकार चीनी के लिए कोई समर्थन मूल्य निर्धारित नही करती है ।

(ख) से (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठते ।

Production of sugar and payment of arrears to sugarcane growers

3727. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the production of sugar during the years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) the reasons for lower production of sugar; and

(c) the amount of arrears payable to the farmers, year-wise; State-wise and the steps taken to clear the arrears?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The production of sugar during the seasons 1994-95 1995-96 and 1996-97 was as under:

(lakh

Sugar Year (Oct. to Sept.)	Production tonnes)
1994-95	146.43
1995-96 (Prov)	164.29
1996-97. (upto 31st March 1997)	106.05

(b) The reason for the shortfall in sugar production can primarily be attributed to delayed commencement of crushing operations during the current season 1996-97 on account of prolonged crushing during the last 1995-96 sugar season.

(c) A statement showing State-wise position of Cane Price Arrears payable to the farmers during the year 1996-97 1995-96, 1994-95 and earlier seasons as on 15.3.1997 is Annexed. *(See* below)

The responsibility of ensuring timely payments of cane price dues lies with the State Governments which have the necessary powers and field organisations to enforecc such payments.

The Central Government, on its part, has taken measures for improving the financial position of sugar factories to enable them to pay the farmers' dues, such as grant of incentives for late crushing during 1994-95 & 1995-96 seasons creation of buffer stock, permission for export of sugar etc.

Statement

Slate-wise position of cane price arrears payable to the farmers during the year 1996-97, 1995-96 and 1994-95 & earlier seasons as on 15.3.97.

(Figures in lukh Rs.)

SI. No	State	Cane price arrears		
		1996-97	1995-96	1994-95 & earlier
1	2	3	4	5.
1.	PUNJAB	11073.35	947.64	0.00
2.	HARYANA	9346.38	670.48	6 20
3.	RAJASTHAN	459.69	168.80	0 00
4.	UTTAR PRADESH	38211.67	13073.21	544 65
6.	MADHYA PRADESH	2392.30	45.20	0 77
6.	GUJARAT	2564.76	95.76	0.00
7.	MAHARASHTRA	7713.44	1511.47	48.75